

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL
MINUTES
October 5, 2004

The Edgefield County Council held its regular meeting at 6:00 P. M. Tuesday, October 5, 2004, in the County Council Chambers, 225 Jeter Street, Edgefield.

Members present:

C. Monroe Kneece, Chairman
Willie C. Bright, Vice Chairman
Norman Dorn, Councilman
Joel D. Hudson, Councilman
B. Everette Kitchens, Councilman

Others present:

Wayne Adams, County Administrator
John F. Byrd, Jr., County Attorney
Barbara R. Stark, Clerk to Council
and others as per list attached

After calling the meeting to order, Chairman Kneece asked Rev. George Brightharp to give the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited after the invocation.

Minutes

The motion to approve the minutes of the September 7th Regular Meeting of Council and the September 21st Called Meeting, was made by Councilman Bright, and seconded by Councilman Dorn. Motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Kitchens asked about the EMS \$109,000 deficit on the Treasurer's report and stated he understood Mr. Adams to say that everything would be o.k. as soon as the cash flow from property tax started coming in. Mr. Adams said that about 65% of the revenue for EMS comes from property taxes- the other 35% comes from User Fees. The bills that will be mailed out later in October are to service the appropriations already made by Council and begun to be expended on July 1st. So, essentially, EMS borrows from the general fund until those tax revenues come in. What you see on the Treasurer's report is a credit balance that will be paid back to the general fund.

Reports

Councilman Kitchens asked about Report Number 5: Computer and Internet Use Policies. He wanted to know what securities are in place at the present. Mr. Adams referred to the memo dated September 29 (behind reports). "As of October 1, 2004, each user is required to have in place a personal password." Prior to October 1st there was no mandatory requirement of passwords for the use of the PC which you would use to get to the internet. So, stated Councilman Hudson, prior to this policy there was no policy basically.

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Mr. Adams stated there was a policy of no expectation of privacy with regard to using county computers. It did not prevent anyone from having a password – that is an individual choice anyone could make up to that point they could have. But now, in order to protect each user in case there is improper use - we would require a password to be in place so we could pinpoint exactly who it was that had misused a computer in a particular instance. Mr. Kitchens wanted to know “are we saying that anyone who was operating a computer, if they chose not to enter a password, then it was open for anyone to go in and use? Assuming there were no other protections, said Mr. Adams. It was probably more common than not that pass words were not used. The monitoring of this policy will be done by the county’s information technology support group, which is a contracted company called Pro Net. They have the right to do this if the county assigns that task to them.

Ordinances

Approval of the third and final reading of Ordinance No. 04-05-449, “An Ordinance Authorizing the Execution and Delivery of Not Exceeding \$1,500,000 in Principal Amount of a Hospital Revenue Bond Anticipation Note (The Edgefield County Hospital Project) of Edgefield County, SC; Providing for the Form and Details of the Note; Providing for the Disposition of the Proceeds Thereof; and Other Matters Related Thereto.” Councilman Hudson asked for clarification. “The hospital is responsible for paying the note, correct?” Mr. Adams said it is collateralize by the physical plant of the hospital and the revenues of the hospital. It is not a general obligation debt of the county. Councilman Hudson made a motion to accept the third and final reading of Ordinance No. 04-05-449. Motion was seconded by Councilman Kitchens and carried unanimously.

First reading of Ordinance No. 04-05-550, “An Ordinance Adopting the 2003 International Building, Fire, Plumbing, Mechanical, Fuel Gas and Energy Efficiency Codes, and the 2003 International Residential Code Relating to Inspection Activities for Enforcement of the Provisions of Said Codes” was approved by a motion made by Councilman Dorn and seconded by Councilman Hudson. Motion carried unanimously.

First reading of Ordinance No. 04-05-551, “An Ordinance Authorizing the Issuance and Sale of General Obligation Bonds, Series 2004B, or Such Other Appropriate Series Designation, of Edgefield County, SC, in the Principal Amount of Not Exceeding \$500,000; Fixing the Form and Details of the Bonds; Authorizing the County Administrator or His Lawfully Authorized Designee to Determine Certain Matters Relating to the Bonds; Providing for the Payment of the Bonds and the Disposition of the Proceeds Thereof; and Other Matters Relating Thereto.” This is a general obligation debt of the county. It counts against the county’s statutory debt limit and, if the hospital were to go out of business it would not be collateralized by the hospital and its revenues, but by the taxing authority of the county. The way this will work, and this is in place with another bond issue of \$300,000 with the hospital right now, is that they would take their part of their millage distribution (and they are assuming we are going to increase the levy

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to seven mills for their levy) and they would place the amount of principal and interest amortization for any given year (millage money) with the county treasurer. It would be there before any of those principal/interest payments would have to be made. They have asked to do that through their operations levy. Motion was made by Councilman Kitchens, seconded by Councilman Dorn, to approve the first reading of Ordinance No. 04-05-551. Motion carried unanimously.

The motion to accept first reading of Ordinance No. 04-05-552, "An Ordinance Enacting and Adopting a Supplement to the Code of Ordinances for Edgefield County, South Carolina" was made by Councilman Bright, seconded by Councilman Kitchens. Motion carried unanimously.

New Business

Mr. Bill Gilchrist, County Auditor, addressed council concerning the 2004 millage. The 2004 county operations levy will remain at sixty five (65) mills, which is where it was last year. The county debt service will be down 1.5 mills to 5.5; hospital operations is going up 1.4 mills to seven mills; EMS is going up 3.5 mills to 13.5 mills; industrial development will stay at one mill; county recreation will go up 0.19 of a mill, taking it to 1.92 mills; school operations will go up 1.78 mills to 177.64 mills; the school bonds actually will be down from thirty (30) mills a year ago to twenty eight (20) mills, and the fire millage remains at ten (10). Basically, the millage rate for someone living in Edgefield County (not one of the towns) will be up 3.42 mills. If they do live in one of the towns, the millage rate will be 299.56 and the town millage will apply where the property is located. The new millage rate for vehicles will not apply until January 1, 2005. Last year the value of a mill for county operations was \$46,058. This year that value is \$47,230., which is up \$1,172., or just a little bit over 2.5%. This is mostly due to residential growth.

Councilman Dorn asked the Auditor to explain about tax on automobiles. What is happening right now is that three years ago we were taxing on automobiles at a rate of ten and a half percent. Now, we are at eight and a quarter percent. What that does is there will be a value drop through the year anyway without the law. The reduction in the assessment rates results in less revenue. The residential growth is bringing in more vehicles to be registered, which is a great help. We are not breaking even by any means but not losing as much revenue as we thought we would – we are half way into the new state law.

The road maintenance fee (ordinance passed by council) ran for thirty six (36) months. If you need those revenues (equipment, etc.) the proper way to go about it is with a fee because you set the ordinance for a certain time limit but you don't lock it down into your operating levy, which of course your millage rate will go up. No doubt council will have to look at this again.

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The recreation levy is to service the budget passed by council in June. The salary did not go up for the position. The millage went up two tenths of a mill. We had a balance brought forward from the previous year and we had no balance to bring forward in the 2005 budget.

Concerning the industrial taxes, we are again this year dealing with depreciation which means a textile mill or a manufacturer can claim depreciation every year on their machinery, not the real property. You are dealing with higher dollar value equipment taxed to the ten and a half percent rate and then you have your growth on your residential real estate which is only a four percent assessment ratio. It is coming back and eating up not all of the residential growth.

The Carlisle Plant that has been in the county for years has closed, which will be a big loss. Loss of revenue anticipated for next year for the county, schools, town of Trenton, will be \$110,000 to \$112,000. V. F. Playwear will be completely closed by the end of the year. They are now paying about \$266,000 in taxes a year and that amount is spread across all levies. In that \$266,000 they get an infrastructure credit (third year this year). It was \$175,000 two years ago; \$150,000 last year; it will be \$150,000 this year and next year it will be \$150,000. This year the revenue will be the same but next year it probably will drop from \$266,000 to \$115,000. The infrastructure credit will be dissolved after next fall so in the fall of 2006 the revenue will go back up to about \$260,000 plus. They will not be taxed on personal property after this year and the value of that building currently is about sixteen and a half million dollars. The agreement is at six percent. They cannot come in and appeal the value of the building once the assessor's office picks it up – even if no one in the plant at that time. Total county loss of revenue will be approximately \$150,000 off the \$266,000 tax bill.

Normally the tax rolls open the middle of October which is the 15th. This year it will be pushed up because council will be holding a public meeting to override the CPI on the EMS millage. The meeting will be held October 21st. Tax bills will be mailed on the 25th and the tax rolls will open on the 28th. A performance report on EMS will be presented to council at the meeting on October 21st.

The two-year terms of five Planning Commission members expire November 1, 2004. The Commission has asked Council to reappoint the following members to the Planning Commission for a two-year term:

**James F. Burt, Roger Hill Timpson, Norman Stephenson
Tracy Freeman, Jim Oliver**

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Motion was made by Councilman Kitchens, seconded by Councilman Dorn, to approve these individuals to serve a two-year term on the Planning Commission Board. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Howard Gibson addressed Council concerning a request from the Town of Edgefield to accept Highland Avenue Ext. (city limits) into the county maintenance system, and also a request to accept Whispering Woods Dr. into the system. Mr. Gibson stated there are five property owners on Highland Avenue Ext. but only two houses are served by this road. It is basically a driveway – three tenths of a mile long. To bring it up to county specs would cost about \$150,000.00. Dressing and paving it could cost as much as \$25,000.00. He stated that he did not feel that the county should take responsibility because it only serves two houses. Most of the roads in the town limits are maintained either by the State or the County. Motion was made by Councilman Bright, seconded by Councilman Dorn, to turn this request (Highland Avenue Ext) over to the Transportation Committee and let them look at it and make a recommendation. Motion carried unanimously.

Whispering Woods Dr., a new subdivision off Currytowne Road and adjacent to Currytowne Station was addressed by Mr. Gibson. Mr. Ashley Williams was the developer, and he went through every step. It is an excellent subdivision – everything is underground, drainage is good and it has nice size lots. Mr. Gibson said it is an asset to the county. His department has a letter of credit from the bank and they have met all of the requirements as far as testing of the soils. His recommendation to Council was to consider the contingency acceptance for a year until the bond expires. Motion was made by Councilman Hudson, seconded by Councilman Kitchens, to accept Whispering Woods Dr., into the county maintenance system. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gibson also asked council's consideration to set the speed limit of 25 mph on Indian Ridge, Cheves Creek Circle, Wilderness Trail, and Horns Creek. He stated that some of the property owners on these roads had talked with him concerning the speed limit on these roads. Once the signs have been posted the Sheriff will be notified. Motion was made by Councilman Hudson, seconded by Councilman Bright, to set the speed limit for each of the roads at 25 mph. Motion carried unanimously.

The Council asked that the school district be informed that 6:00, Wednesday, November 16th has been set for the Joint School Board/Council meeting. It will be held at the Sertoma Club in Johnston.

Mr. Adams explained the next item: hardware and maintenance expenditures to filter internet usage and block unwanted ("Spam") emails. This will block out certain sites on the internet, and the anti "spam" part has to do with unwanted e-mails people get and prevent offensive material from coming in. There is a risk of a virus, although we have

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good virus protection through our IT provider and through the state. The total amount for three years is \$4,596 for all county computers - all of those on our user network. Of course, the best way to block out improper materials is for the user not to visit those sites. Councilman Hudson wanted to know if a person could still access a certain site and the administrator told him it would be harder. This will also tell you with the URL and content filtering if anyone is trying to access inappropriate sites. Councilman Hudson made the motion to implement the use of hardware and maintenance expenditures to filter internet usage and block unwanted "spam" e-mails for three years. The motion was seconded by Councilman Bright. Motion carried unanimously.

Prior to a motion being made concerning the next agenda item requesting assistance from the SC Judicial Department's Office of Disciplinary Counsel in an investigative matter, Councilman Hudson made a motion to hear comments from the public in attendance concerning this matter. Councilman Kitchens seconded the motion. Councilman Dorn asked what difference would this make as to what they say because there are only five people deciding good or bad. If they don't like what is being done there is an election every two years. It (public comment) is a waste of time. What difference does it make what somebody will say when we have pretty much in mind what we are going to do anyway. Mr. Hudson agreed but feels it is a very sensitive matter to many people considering the number of telephone calls he has received in the last few weeks. These people have gone out of their way to come here and acknowledge what has happened and what is going on - they should have a chance to state their piece before a vote is taken. Motion carried with one nay by Councilman Dorn.

Eleven citizens of the county asked to address Council concerning whether or not to request that the State Judicial Department investigate the misuse of a county computer in the Probate Court offices. Their comments are appended in their entirety as pages 10-15 of these minutes.

After public comments but before the vote, Councilman Hudson asked "Did two law enforcement agencies look at this and find anything criminal? I have heard that it has been swept under the rug. I think we requested that two law enforcement agencies look at this, so that is not being swept under the rug. I want it understood that we have had two law enforcement agencies look at this information."

At this time, the Chairman said he would like to answer this question. "Edgefield Police Department was the first group there. They did what little bit they could. They said, well we do not see a criminal intent on this. We spoke with the attorney in Columbia, (Gignilliat Savitz & Bettis) and the Solicitor's office; both said we could conduct our own investigation. It is a county computer and Mr. Adams had the right to go in and confiscate the computer. This matter was turned over after the Edgefield Police Depart-

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ment did not want anything more to do with it and then it went to SLED in Columbia. SLED did not investigate it. They sent word back to us recommending that we turn it over to the Judicial Department to be investigated. That is where we stand now. I don't see anything wrong with sending it to the Judicial Committee to let them find good, bad, or indifferent. What comes back to them would be a final thing."

Councilman Hudson: "Does Bobby Peeler work for the County Council or does he work for the Judicial Committee?" The Chairman stated that he works for the Judicial Committee, and he also receives a salary from Edgefield County. All of his bills are paid by Edgefield County: electric bill, telephone bill, computer bill – his building is County owned. He receives a salary so he is partially an Edgefield County employee. The issue here is do we do nothing or do we send it to his boss and let them do whatever?" Mr. Hudson said his problem here is that we have requested two law enforcement divisions to check a man who does not work for me – whether I agree with what he has done or not – he does not work for me, he works for the Judicial Committee and it is their job to be checking their people. We have checked that there was nothing criminal there – we haven't swept anything under the rug. It is in the newspaper and everywhere, we have not swept anything under the rug. We have requested two law enforcement divisions to look at this. When the Judicial Committee does not do anything, are we going to come back and say the County Council is not doing their job?" Mr. Kneece said when you turn it over to the Judicial Committee it is final. Councilman Hudson said it is in their hands everyday that he works for them.

Councilman Kitchens: "The first thing that the county had in mind whenever this happened, was to find out if there was anything illegal on the tapes. The city policy said there was not anything illegal; SLED investigated and I have a letter here in my hand that says they find nothing illegal. He does not work for us as Joel said – he works for the people of this county. He was elected by the people of this county and I am not sure that we have any jurisdiction over him, so we have done our part as a county agent. We have looked into it and we have had other people look into it. Now, if it needs to go beyond this point there are plenty opportunities for it to go, but this county needs to put it behind us, get down to business and start running the county's business again. I am really upset with this because anybody could have walked into that office, as we have said here tonight and found out, that there were no controls over the computer. There were no passwords so anybody could use it. We have talked about this before. There are too many people in and out these offices to start with. Now, we don't have any right to sit and say "Mr. Peeler, you violated something when everybody else had access to his computer." Also, we are not here tonight to judge his personality, and that is what we have heard. He may not have the personality we want; he may not have the rapport with the people around him. I think possibly that could have been created. At this point, I make a motion that we put this behind us and do not take any further action, and any other action that needs to be taken can be taken by another body.

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Councilman Bright spoke. "First of all, we have no jurisdiction over Judge Peeler. Like they say, he has been nice to me, but we have a responsibility to this county. We are responsible for those computers. The state wanted to put in the T-1. Chief Justice came to us and asked us to appropriate the money. So we must have some responsibility – don't tell me we don't – we do have some responsibility. What the responsibility is I am not sure. This is one reason why I think someone else should look at it."

Chairman Kneece agreed and stated that "We have responsibility to every employee up there (elected or hired). These five people here are the ones who make the rules and regulations of the county. I agree with one thing about it. If we don't do anything, then it is on our heads. I can't see why anybody up here is against letting the truth be determined by the people in Columbia which are unbiased and will give you a fair hearing on everything – I just don't see why you are against sending it over there to have it done. If it is a family affair, if it is kinfolk or anything like that."

Councilman Hudson stated that he would second the motion, but along with that he said that we have had two law enforcement divisions tell us that there is nothing criminal there and we did not have a policy. Had we fired an employee that was looking at that internet we would possibly have a suit on our hands, which we may possibly have now. The further we push this – it is up to the judicial department – he works for them – it is up to them to check him. We have done our job. We are beating a dead horse. "I second the motion."

Chairman Kneece asked for the motion again. Councilman Kitchens made the motion that we put an end to this tonight. I feel like we have done all we need to do as far as having it investigated. Drop it and don't send it any further. Motion seconded by Councilman Hudson. Chairman Kneece said although there is a motion and a second on the floor he still did not feel council had done its job. Motion carried with three yeas: Councilmen Dorn, Hudson, Kitchens, and two nays: Councilmen Kneece and Bright.

Chairman Kneece stated that he and Mr. Bright were out voted, and hopefully someone will pick up the ball and override us. Councilman Kitchens said if it warrants, then I hope so too.

A citizen asked Mr. Kneece if the lady (Tricia Glenn) had made a personal grievance complaint? Is that not an issue to the County of Edgefield? Was that totally avoided? Mr. Kneece said that would have to be done in writing.

Daphne Cook, a former archives department employee, at this time advised Council that Judge Peeler and his staff are the only individuals that have keys to that office, and they keep their offices locked. There is no way anyone from the street could use that computer.

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Margaret Buchanan (North Augusta)

Thanked the council for letting them speak. Speaking on behalf of the whole county really. Looking at this situation that has come up and has been spread all over the newspapers, ruining a man's reputation. This thing I don't approve of. As a Christian person, I don't approve of. If he knew of what you have passed tonight about these computers, I don't believe that man would even permit someone to go in that computer or go in his office and permit anything like that. He is a very honorable, very dignified, very professional man. This county is lucky to have one like him. He is a great judge and I am not only speaking because I know him I am speaking from experience. He has done my family business services on two occasions, and has done a marvelous job, but I say if you are going to single people out you should do the whole county and I mean if you are going to do it now – but if you save this right now I don't think you will ever have any more trouble out of him if that is who you think was doing it. How do we really know that is the person-we don't know that-because computers are funny things. You can have codes on them, shut them down and have all kinds of things. I have been working in business for a long time. You can shut them down and open them back up and still get into a person's computer. Computers are funny. I get all kinds of stuff on mine but I have that Norton coverage on mine and I don't get that junk. I am saying that as a professional man he is I think you just need to lay off and keep it out of the news and do it like professional people ought to. You are five men up here-you could handle it in any other way than having it put in the newspaper. You could have went to him as a man – and he is that kind of person and he would have listened. That is all I got to say.

Charlotte Munns

May I ask Mr. Adams a question that I heard him say about something earlier? The chairman informed Ms. Munns that this was not a question/answer period. Mr. Adams, did you say that the computers now that people get on did not have to have pass words or anything like that. Mr. Adams: “Not until October 1st.” Then anybody could have been on that computer, could have accessed that computer. That is what I thought you said. I am here tonight to speak because I know that Judge Peeler is a very professional and a very faithful family man. Over the years he has done a lot for us, my family – with Wills, dealt with a Trust and other things – just as he has helped other people in this county. He has given 110% to this county, I believe. I know him to be a loving husband and father and he is a very devoted family man.

Carol Bryan

Mr. Chairman, council members, fellow taxpayers and friends. With the county's indulgence I will read this statement in order to be brief. In light of the recent deplorable discoveries concerning the gross misuse by the Edgefield County Probate Judge of a county computer on county time, it seems a good time to reflect on some other sad events concerning the Edgefield County Probate office.

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Several months ago I had the happy task of educating six new teachers in our county school system with a tour of the sites around town. Our last stop was to be the County Archives so that they could see the state of art facility and view some of the historical papers and documents stored there. As this council is well aware access to the Archives is through the Probate offices. We arrived about five minutes 'til 2:00 p.m. Judge Peeler was seated behind the front desk with what I assume to be a client seated in the hallway portion of the area. Judge Peeler looked up as we entered and curtly announced "that she is at lunch", meaning the county archivist. I mentioned to the group that I had forgotten that lunch was from one until two. In order not to be rude we would wait outside since the Judge was conducting business in the hallway. Judge Peeler again looked up from the desk and announced so that all could hear, "Yes, you are being rude and asinine." You can imagine our shock at such a statement but we dutifully went out the front door. I covered the rudeness by saying to the teachers, "Well, you are teaching abstinence and character in our public schools – you just met a county character. When we re-entered the building just a few minutes later, accompanied by Daphne Cook who was serving for the day as the county archivist, Daphne held the door for us. I realized as we entered the hallway to the Archives, Daphne was not behind us. I heard one of the staff members say quite loudly, "Judge Peeler was not rude to that woman", meaning me. I did not hear anything said by Daphne, nor did any of the teachers even though we were just a few feet away. But right after the teachers left, a city policeman came in and arrested Daphne for disturbing the peace. He took a statement from both of us and then took her to be fingerprinted. Ladies and gentlemen, this was a deplorable and needless ordeal. Daphne was fired and is no longer allowed to fill in for the Archivist when she is out. She was held up to public ridicule because of the incident that was reported in the local paper.

Because there is a constant string of visitors in our county from around the nation, I think that it is mandatory that our officials roll out the red carpet for them by being cheerful, helpful, and courteous. Yet, visitors have negatively commented on many occasions to those of us who work at the Tompkins Library about the atmosphere in the public area of the Archives building. We even had a couple from Texas who had been treated so rudely by Judge Peeler that they insisted one of us accompany them through the area to get to the Archives. Let it be known that visitors are always complimentary and appreciative concerning the staff in the Archives section of the building, but sad to say the same cannot be said of the Probate Judge. Visitors have complained about the loudness of the area, the rudeness on the part of Judge Peeler and about the cigarette smoke that is unavoidable. Nothing has been said to you to date because the Probate Judge is an elected official and it just did not seem any good could come of the complaints. However, it is time for our elected officials to air the dirty linen and have the Probate Judge investigated by the Judicial Ethics Commission. It is also time for county taxpayers to be made of aware of the gross inadequacies and reprehensible behavior of our county Probate Judge. Thank you.

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Diane Sharpe

Needless to say that I, too, am very concerned as an Edgefield County citizen who has moved here in the last seven years. I have never participated in any county council meetings. This has been a rude awakening for me to see that we do not hold our leaders accountable as an elected official for acts that are conducted in their guidance and their offices. Therefore, I am concerned too, as a leader, an elected official under oath, whether or not he personally conducted these violations, if he will be held accountable and reported, and if so, how that investigation will be completed.

Tonya Taylor (did not speak)

Raymond Timmerman

My remarks will really be brief since my councilman said it does not matter what you say because we already know what we are going to do. But I would like for it to be known that the majority, almost without exception, the people that has talked to me or expressed their opinion, feel the situation should be turned over the Justice Department. I won't have anything further to say since what we say does not matter.

Tricia Glenn

I am nervous. Good evening. I am going to read this. I would like to log a grievance. I have spoken privately with you Mr. Kitchens, and with you Mr. Bright and with you Mr. Byrd, with you Mr. Adams about the rude treatment that Teresa Harvey and I receive from Judge Peeler and his staff when we are working in the Archives. Peeler has also made insulting remarks to visitors about us. These visitors have told the Tompkins Library staff that Teresa and I are called ogre and other names, not fit to be mentioned here. For many, many years it has been common knowledge to all of those who work in conjunction with the Archives that Peeler has a particular petit hatred for my colleague, Teresa Harvey, and he has recently taken up this same brand of petit hatred against me to the point that I dread having to walk through the Probate Judge's area. There have been many times when I would have liked to told him to go to H, but knowing what happened to the last person who did that, Peeler had her arrested and the county fired her, I have kept quiet. I am appalled therefore, to discover that even though our county won't tolerate someone saying the word Hell in one of their public buildings, some of you may find it perfectly alright for someone to spend possibly hundreds of hours on taxpayers time on a county owned computer in a county building watching sexually explicit all male pornography pictures and you may possibly do nothing about it. I really wish that you would send this to the Judicial Ethics Committee. This is very hard for all of us to understand. It is extreme bias and totally unfair to the taxpaying citizens of Edgefield County. And, by the way, Teresa and I have always had a password on our computer long before any of this internet misuse came up. We have nothing to hide and you are welcome to check it at any time. It was just common sense to have a password on the computer. Thank you.

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Roy Blackwell

Thank you gentlemen. I am amazed at some of the information that has been leaked out. But aside from that I'll start with saying that this meeting being held about Judge Peeler is not a meeting you need to be holding. My personal opinion and, that of several elected officials, constitutional decisions, they do not answer to Wayne Adams. Constitutional positions would be yours. You are a constitutional officer. Wayne Adams has no authority over you. The Sheriff is a constitutional officer and Wayne Adams has no jurisdiction or oversight of his office. Judge Peeler is a constitutional officer and Wayne Adams has no review oversight of his office. Now I have heard the excuses offered that it is a county computer. Well, it would do Mr. Adams and you well to know that Section 14.190 states that the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court shall be the administrative head and his powers and duties he shall be the administrative head of all courts in this state and he shall examine the administrative methods, systems and activities of the courts and their employees. I did not see Wayne Adams' name in there and I did not see administrator's position listed in there. By what has taken place, we have someone who walked into an office without a warrant and removed a computer from that office, reviewed the files on that computer which he has no right to do. This would be the exact same thing and, I would be curious to know if he thinks he could walk in when Sheriff Dobey is not in his office and unplug his computer and take it and put it in his office and look at the files for thirty days, or longer. If he really thinks he can do that he needs to go ask Sheriff Dobey what he thinks about that because I can't repeat what he said he would say. And I think this meeting at this time you need to be discussing whether this man has a job, not Judge Peeler. We talk petty hate I have lived in this county, I grew up here, I have lived here forty two years, not just a few years, and I don't have close little connections with the little inside click that certain people run in. I am ashamed of this council allow this man to do what he did. He has no authorization, he has no legal authority, and if he wants to monitor the internet he can do that from the Budget and Control Board. He doesn't need a computer to do that. In other words a definite personal reason that Mr. Adams wanted that computer. I think you need to check with law enforcement and I think you need to call for an investigation of Wayne Adams, not Judge Peeler.

G. L. Brightharp

I will not comment on the activities that took place, per se. However, my family moved to this county September 1949 and I have seen the change and the metamorphoses that have taken place in this county as far as equal treatment under the law and by the law in this county. Over the last few years we have seen mammoth growth and the ability of all people to receive a fair shake and to have business carried out in a business like manner. And Judge Peeler is one of those persons who I can attest that have been at the background and the foreground of this taken place and making sure that this tradition is carried on. I hope that we, as a county, will stop this activity, I don't won't to say charade, this activity right where it is because dirty laundry has no place in the open air.

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It should be kept in a private place until it is cleaned up by those who are responsible. We have an electorate in this county and he will be coming up and he will be reviewed by those that cast ballots. So, it is my request, that this matter stop within the frame work of our county, that we allow it to die just like it came alive, because Mr. Peeler has established himself as an even-handed conduit of the law. For instance, I brought a person to him whose land had not been or whose will of their father had not been probated and their father died in 1962. I watched the professional way that he went and worked with this lady to make sure that she was protected by the law and that her land was cleared before senility and death set in. I also watched him work with many families in that I am in the funeral business and I have seen him take his own personal time and put into exceptional cases to make sure that those cases worked out reasonably. With our situation he enforces the law, he makes sure that we are compensated properly and our documents are filed adequately. Therefore, I close this by saying let us keep our dirty laundry among ourselves, let us not let it spread any further because we have a wonderful servant of the people who has done a great job over the years and the people will make the final determinacy at election time. Thank you very much.

Betsy Martin

I would just like to say that it bothers me having been a native of this county to see this kind procedure going on, and I would just like to make the remark that whatever has gone on if it can be discussed and worked out in a way in which, as Dr. Brightharp said, dirty laundry doesn't have to be aired. I happened to be in town the day that I heard a lot of sirens going on. For all I knew it was a double murder. There were police cars coming this direction, that direction and whatever. When I found out what it was, I said you know this hasn't been handled the right way. We all have things that we maybe have come up with Bobby and probate court and all that I can do is just say a couple of very nice things in which he handled things that involved me. One of them, of course, was the passing of a relative, my mother. He walked me through that and he went beyond the call of duty. The other was quite different, and it was a few years ago. I talked with my son before I talked with you about that because he is a recovered alcoholic addict. And Bobby, I was having a lot of problems with him, and Bobby worked with me, with Dr. Rainsford in a way that I would not have been able to commit him. I had to commit my child to psychiatric unit in Anderson. If he had not been cooperative in the way he had done that and gone the extra mile that would have never happened. Jody is seven years sober now. All that I can say is that somebody that is an elected official is just what I have seen personally from my point of view, but I hate that this kind of thing and it seems like other things in this county have gone on that people aired their petty differences rather than being able to try to work out a good Edgefield like I remember. I think that maybe a lot of people ought to try to come together and not treat matters like this in this way.

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Bill Harvey

First, Mr. Dorn, I did not appreciate your comments on the way you started out your little deal a while ago. I don't think it was very appropriate and I wasn't surprised at you though. (Mr. Dorn: That makes two of us.) But my name is Bill Harvey. Teresa Harvey, the Archivist, is my wife. She comes home from that office crying about half the time because that sweet, loving man that some of you all love, he talks to her like a dog. (Response from the audience.) He does talk to her like a dog. But the only reason I am up here now, is not for that, but if I could get my hands on him I would – I don't know what I would do to him. But, what I am saying to you gentlemen, you have a duty to your constituents to make sure that this thing goes to Columbia and let the judiciary and if they say there is nothing to it that is fine, it is all over. But if the judiciary says it is wrong he should be prosecuted. Thank you.

John Jerrard

Thank you for letting me speak. My name is John Jerrard, and I just have one thing to say. Handling death and being kind to people is Bobby Peeler's job and a lot of people do their job and do it well – don't have to be a saint. Bobby Peeler, if he has done nothing wrong that is fine, but let's send it to the judicial committee in Columbia and let them decide. This is something that does not have to be decided in our county – there are procedures for it to be handled, let's not put it under the rug. Thank you.